

greater levels of investment. And yet, to invest significantly less than the Senate was willing to invest fails to meet the goals I just discussed: to treat all States and modes of transportation fairly.

That does not mean that the Senate level is the only level and that a long-term bill cannot be completed at a lower investment level. But I have not seen, nor do I believe that anyone has seen, a willingness to seriously discuss that possibility.

Thus, we find ourselves in the unfortunate position of once again being up against the end of another extension. Rather than keeping States in the dark about their future, it seems to me that the bipartisan approach of Senators BOND, REID, SHELBY and SARBANES makes sense. In fact, several transportation groups have also called for a longer-term extension. As I said, I hope and urge the majority leader to take up the Bond-Reid transportation extension early next week.

Transportation has, by and large, been a bipartisan endeavor. After all, our economy, our infrastructure, and our Nation's families need and deserve a good transportation bill, one that will create good jobs and provide the investments in our Nation's infrastructure that are so desperately needed. I am hopeful that we can do better, that we will renew our efforts and continue to work as hard as possible to find the bipartisan solution that has been so elusive. And I hope that we can reach that compromise sooner rather than later.

I yield the floor.

HOMELAND SECURITY NEEDS A GREEN LIGHT, NOT A BLUE SLIP

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, last week, the Senate approved overwhelmingly the fiscal year 2005 Homeland Security Appropriations bill. This bill makes critical investments in our protections here at home. And in light of the constant threat warnings from law enforcement and homeland security officials, those investments cannot be made quickly enough. Yet it has been 10 days since the Senate passed the measure and the House has not even appointed conferees.

Why has any progress toward protecting the people hit a brick wall? The legislation is in jeopardy because of the judgment of the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. I do not intend to talk about the chairman in a negative light. But I must point out to Senators that the chairman's actions could jeopardize the entire Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

During Senate debate, Democrat and Republican Senators worked to invest additional dollars in homeland security. We must work to close the gaps in our protections here at home. Too many exist, and you can be sure that, if we know where those gaps are, so do the terrorists.

That is why it was welcomed on both sides of the aisle when the Senator from Montana, Mr. BAUCUS, suggested a way to include \$784 million in homeland security protections without violating arbitrary congressional spending limits. The Senator from Montana suggested that we help to protect Americans from terrorist attack by extending existing customs user fees that are set to expire in March 2005. It was a commonsense approach, one that I applaud Senator COCHRAN, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Homeland Security panel, and the majority leader, Senator FRIST, for embracing. It was common sense because many of the agreement provided funding to key programs within the Department of Homeland Security, most of which are customs related, and did so without violating the budget caps or adding to the deficit.

The Senate adopted that funding, approved the bill, and asked the House for a conference. We were making progress. We were helping to save lives.

But then came the disappointment. The Senate was informed that the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee has recommended that the House of Representatives "blue-slip" this legislation, returning the measure to the Senate. But the funding will help to protect this country from attack, and we should not allow congressional turf battles to stop it.

Congressman MARTIN OLAV SABO, the ranking member of the House Appropriations Homeland Security Subcommittee, and I have written to the Speaker of the House and urge that the Speaker help to move this legislation forward. We ought to send it to conference, complete our work, and help to protect our country. Delay is unacceptable.

The additional funding provides needed investments to protect our borders, equip first responders, enhance air and rail security, and ensure that security measures are provided to harden potential terrorism targets.

Specifically, the additional funding will allow Customs and Border Protection to purchase additional radiation detectors to respond to the threat of a nuclear or radiological weapon being smuggled into this country. CBP is far behind on its plan for deploying 2,037 radiation portal monitors at our ports. The additional \$50 million provided by this amendment will allow CBP to deploy radiation portal monitors to screen 100 percent of inbound containerized cargo at 30 additional seaport terminals.

This investment will provide Immigration and Customs Enforcement with an additional \$50 million to address a manpower shortage within the Federal Air Marshal program and be more aggressive in placing air marshals on high-interest flights.

The funding being stymied in the House would increase resources to equip and train our nation's firemen by providing an additional \$50 million

through the fire grants program, which is one of the best run programs in the Federal Government.

The money would address the shortage of border employees by providing \$150 million for more border inspectors and agents, and immigration and customs criminal investigators. The Department of Homeland Security has not yet met the northern border staffing goals set in the U.S. PATRIOT Act. An additional \$50 million is also included for the detention and removal of illegal aliens.

This amendment strengthens the northern border by providing an additional \$200 million to speed up the development of five air wings along the northern border which will track, identify, and intercept aircraft that are unauthorized to enter U.S. airspace.

The funds advance efforts to protect the millions of Americans who use public transportation over 32 million times per work day. The additional \$128 million was approved by the Senate so that the Department can pursue investments to harden the security of transit systems by investing in additional law enforcement, canine teams, and training.

The legislation invests an additional \$56 million to the Emergency Management Performance Grants program to help emergency managers at the state and community level to prepare, respond, and recover from all hazards.

Finally, the bill ensures that \$50 million goes to high-risk non-profit organizations to develop security plans and make necessary improvements to prevent a terrorist attack.

The Department of Homeland Security is working day and night to stop potential terrorist attacks. But the Department cannot operate if it does not have any money. We cannot wait to address gaps in our nation's defenses while this new department is crafted. Terrorists will not wait to attack anew.

We cannot afford delay. The Senate has passed this critical legislation; now it requires the approval of the entire Congress. This bipartisan legislation must move quickly to bolster our weaknesses, address our shortfalls, and protect American lives.

I urge the Speaker, and the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee to drop this threat of delay. The President, the Vice President, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, the CIA Director, and the FBI Director have each stated quite clearly that the country is at risk of attack. It serves no one's best interests to bicker over turf battles when lives are at stake. For the sake of the people, for the sake of the nation, I urge the House to strengthen the homeland security protections and make life more difficult for the terrorists. Don't blue-slip this funding. Green light it instead.